

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
14 March 2002 (14.03.2002)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 02/20341 A2**

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: **B63B**

(72) Inventor; and

(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB01/03754

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(22) International Filing Date: 21 August 2001 (21.08.2001)

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(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:  
0022072.3 8 September 2000 (08.09.2000) GB  
0107803.9 28 March 2001 (28.03.2001) GB

(81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.

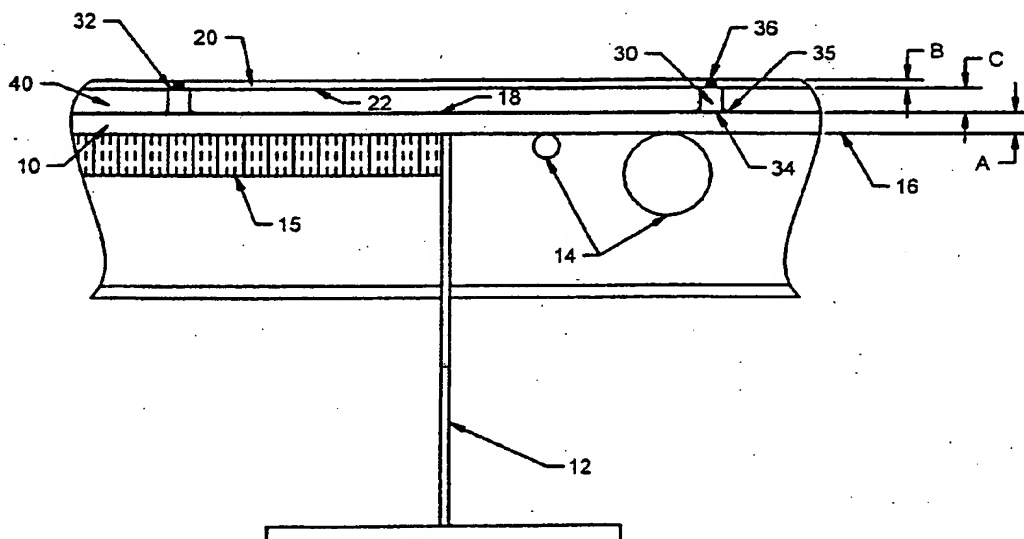
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(84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG; ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF,

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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: METHOD OF REINFORCING AN EXISTING METAL STRUCTURE, METHOD OF REINFORCING PIPES AND METHOD OF ADDITION OF SPUR LINES TO PIPELINES



(57) Abstract: A method of reinforcing a metal panel or pipe of an existing structure comprising the steps of attaching a reinforcing metal layer to said metal panel or pipe in spaced apart relation to thereby form at least one cavity between inner surfaces of said metal panel and said reinforcing metal layer, injecting an intermediate layer comprised of an uncured plastics material into said at least one cavity, and curing said plastics material so that it adheres to said inner surfaces of said metal panel or pipe and said reinforcing metal layer.

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CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

*For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.*

**Published:**

— *without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report*

METHOD OF REINFORCING AN EXISTING METAL STRUCTURE, METHOD  
OF REINFORCING PIPES AND METHOD OF ADDITION OF SPUR LINES TO  
PIPELINES

5       The present invention relates to a method of reinforcing and/or reinstating  
and/or rehabilitating an existing metal structure, particularly existing metal panels of  
larger existing structures. More particularly, the method relates to reinforcing and/or  
reinstating metal panels which have been reduced in thickness by corrosion and/or  
wear in service and which must therefore be replaced or strengthened. The present  
10   invention also relates to reinforcing pipelines and to adding spur lines to existing  
pipelines.

      Metal panels used for deck plates of Ro-Ro (or Ro-Pax) ferries experience  
corrosion and wear rates in the range of 0.1 to 0.3mm per year with typical rates of  
15   0.15mm per year. According to the rules and regulations of classification societies  
such as Lloyd's Register, the plates must be replaced when the original thickness is  
reduced by 30% because then the mechanical properties are significantly decreased.  
Plate replacement requirements and the corresponding reduced plate thickness  
expressed as a function of the original plate thickness for typical ships sections and  
20   structural elements are specified in Lloyd's Register technical document entitled  
"Thickness Measurement and Close-up Survey of Ships in Accordance with Lloyd's  
Register Rules and Regulations for the Classification of Ships - Revision 2, January  
1997". The elastic section modulus and moment of inertia reductions cause stresses  
and deflections of more than a critical amount. Plates in other portions of the ship  
25   must also be replaced when their reduced thickness reaches values specified by the  
classification societies.

      Current practice requires the deck plate to be removed and replaced to thereby  
extend the life of the ship. This prior art method requires extensive work and can  
30   involve: the replacement of primary stiffening; the detachment of piping and cables;  
the removal of fire insulation material, etc. from the underside of the deck panels;

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scaffolding and extensive welding. It is generally very expensive, time consuming and may even introduce fatigue prone flaws in the welds as these welds are difficult to make in situ.

5       An aim of the invention is to provide a method of structurally reinforcing or reinstating stiffened metal plates without the need to remove the stiffening members and other detailing.

10       Pipelines for the transport of, for example, gas or oil also suffer from the same problems as metal panels used for deck plates of ferries in that they experience corrosion and as a result reduced structural strength and integrity. At present pipelines are repaired by welding steel casings directly to the existing pipes risking burning through the pipes and a resulting explosion. This method of reinforcing pipes is considered dangerous and requires quality field welds. Although expensive,  
15       this method of repair is the most economical for rehabilitating sections of in-service pipelines that cannot be taken out of service. Building parallel replacement pipelines is not considered economically feasible.

20       An aim of the invention is to provide a method of reinforcing or rehabilitating pipes that have deteriorated from corrosion without the need of welding directly to the existing pipeline.

The present invention provides a method of reinforcing an existing metal structure comprising the steps of :

25       attaching a reinforcing metal layer to said metal panel in spaced apart relation to thereby form at least one cavity between inner surfaces of said metal panel and said reinforcing metal layer;

injecting an intermediate layer comprised of an uncured plastics material into said at least one cavity; and

30       curing said plastics material so that it adheres to said inner surfaces of said metal panel and said reinforcing metal layer.

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The method described below advantageously allows a metal panel of an existing structure which has come to the end of its useful life to be reinforced without removal and with little preparation. This results in less off-line time for the structure during reinstatement. The resulting reinforced structure is only marginally more heavy than a new metal panel replacing the old panel. This method allows for the reinstatement of hulls without the need to dry dock. The reinforcement provides inherent damping and sound insulation. The plastics material may be self-curing and simply allowed to cure, or e.g. heat curing and heated to cure it.

The method described below also advantageously allows an existing main pipeline to be reinforced and/or rehabilitated, or to be modified (the addition of spur lines) without the need to weld directly to the existing main pipeline. This reduces the risk of burn-through, gas release and explosion thereby dramatically increasing the safety for the persons making the modifications. A direct consequence of this process of repair is to simplify the weld procedures and reduce the risk and cost of the procedures.

As well as repairing or reinstating or rehabilitating a metal panel or pipeline to original strength, the present invention can of course be applied to any existing structure, whether old or new, to improve, protect or strengthen it as desired.

Currently the addition of spur pipelines for operating pipelines is generally considered to be a difficult and dangerous process and requires special weld procedures to attach the spur pipeline. Usually the spur line is first welded directly to the main pipeline and then the main pipeline inside of the spur pipeline is bored away through special pipe and valve fixtures attached to the spur pipeline.

An aim of the invention is to provide a method of attaching a spur pipeline to an existing pipeline in a more simple and reliable way than at present. Ideally the strength of the joint between the main pipeline and the spur pipeline, the integrity thereof and the safety for making the connection is also improved.

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The present invention provides a method of adding a spur pipeline to an existing main pipeline comprising the steps of:

providing a first metal layer around said main pipeline in spaced apart relation thereby to form a sealed cavity between an inner surface of said metal layer  
5 and an outer surface of said main pipeline;

providing a spur pipeline such that the bore of said spur pipeline is substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of said main pipeline and in communication with said outer surface of said main pipeline and sealed from said first cavity;

10 providing a second metal layer around said spur pipeline in spaced apart relation thereby to form a second cavity between an inner surface of said second metal layer and an outer surface of said spur pipeline;

injecting an intermediate layer comprised of an uncured plastics material into said cavities;

15 curing said plastics material so that it adheres to said surfaces of said metal layer, main pipeline and spur pipeline; and

removing that part of said existing main pipeline which is in communication with said bore of said spur pipeline thereby to connect said bore of said spur pipeline with the bore of said main pipeline.

20

The method described below results in a strong connection between the spur line and the pipeline which can be manufactured in a safe manner.

The structure resulting from use of the present invention is similar to those  
25 described in US Patent 5,778,813, British Patent Application GB-A-2 337 022 and British Patent Application No. 9926333.7. The materials and techniques disclosed in those documents can be made use of in practice of the present invention and structures constructed according to the present invention can enjoy the benefits and advantages described therein.

30

The invention will now be described by way of example only with reference

to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a cross-sectional view of a metal panel of an existing structure which has been reinforced above the metal panel using a method according to the present invention;

5        Figure 2 is a plan view of a metal panel of an existing structure during reinforcing using the method of the present invention;

Figure 3 shows a transverse cross-section of a typical ship to which the present invention may be applied;

Figure 4 is a cross-sectional view of a metal panel of an existing structure  
10        which has been reinforced using a method according to the present invention and which surrounds a lashing pot;

Figure 5 is a cross-sectional view of a metal panel of an existing structure which has been reinforced within the metal panel using a method according to the present invention;

15        Figure 6 is a cross-sectional view of a metal panel of an existing structure which has been reinforced within the metal panel using a method according to the present invention, to provide a composite structural laminate;

Figures 7a, b and c are cross-sectional views of metal panels of existing structures which have been reinforced using a method according to the present  
20        invention and in which the reinforcing metal layers surround supporting members (stiffeners) of the metal panels;

Figure 8 is a cross-sectional view of an existing main pipeline which has been reinforced with multiple casings using a method according to the present invention;

Figures 9a and b are cross-sectional views of cavity circumferential end  
25        spacer rings with various seals which may be used in a method according to the present invention;

Figure 10 is a perspective view of existing main and spur pipelines which have been reinforced using a method according to the present invention. The spur pipeline may be existing or newly attached;

30        Figure 11 is a cross-sectional view of an existing main pipeline with a spur pipeline attached according to a method of the present invention; and

Figure 12 is a cross-sectional view of an existing main pipeline with a spur pipeline attached using an alternate method according to the present invention.

In the Figures, like parts are identified with like numerals.

5

Figure 1 is a cross-sectional view of a deck of a Ro-Ro ferry which has been reinforced by the method according to the present invention. A metal panel 10, forming the original deck, is supported by beams 12 and bulb flats 17. Various pipes and cables 14 as well as fire insulation material 15 are attached to the underside 16 of metal panel 10.

The metal panel 10 has an original thickness A which, in a Ro-Ro ferry deck for example, that would be typically in the range between 10mm and 20mm. Typically, corrosion and wear reduce the thickness of the metal panel 10 by approximately 0.15mm per year. Under these conditions the metal panel 10 would need to be replaced or reinforced after approximately twenty years use.

The method of reinforcing of the present invention involves attaching a reinforcing metal layer 20 to the metal panel 10 of the existing structure. The metal layer 20 is arranged to be in spaced apart relation from the metal panel 10 to thereby form a cavity 40 between the metal panel 10 and the reinforcing metal layer 20. An intermediate core layer of uncured plastics material is then injected or cast into the cavity 40. When the plastics material has cured (it may be a self-curing plastics material which needs no action to be cured or for example a plastics material which requires heating to be cured), it adheres to an inner surface 18 of the metal panel 10 and to an inner surface 22 of the reinforcing metal layer 20 with sufficient strength to transfer shear loads between the metal panel 10 and reinforcing layer 20 so as to form a composite structural member capable of bearing loads significantly greater than self-weight. Generally, all welds are completed prior to injecting the plastics material.



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In the embodiment shown in Figure 1, spacers 30 are provided between the metal panel 10 and the reinforcing metal layer 20. The spacers 30 may be of any cross-section or shape but, when attached to the inner surface 18 of the metal panel 10 by the adjacent surface end 34 typically project above the metal panel 10 by the same amount. This distance may vary from cavity to cavity or it may vary within a cavity depending on application. The reinforcing metal layer 20 is then attached to the other end 32 of the spacers 30 to thereby form the cavity 40. In this way the method may also be carried out on deformed or even buckled panels. The reinforcement will provide a smooth surface for the reinforced side. This is particularly ideal for Ro-Ro ferries as it provides a smooth riding surface for the vehicles.

Preferably the spacers 30 are made of metal and in this way they can be welded (using continuous fillet welds 35) to the original metal panel 10 as well as to the reinforcing metal layer 20 using butt welds 36 along natural plate seams. Conveniently the spacers 30 may be used to subdivide the cavity 40 between the metal panel 10 and the reinforcing metal layer 20 into a plurality of smaller cavities of a size to allow casting therein of the plastics material.

The structure of a ship 100 to which the invention may be applied is shown in Figure 3. This ship is a double-hulled structure with inner and outer side shells 101, 102 and inner and outer bottoms 103, 104. A transverse bulk head 105 is also shown and the deck is shown as 106. The bilge is at 107, the gunwhale 108 and a web frame at 109. The present invention may be applied to any of these parts of the ship and, of course, to other parts and other ships, including single-hulled vessels.

The best way presently known to the applicant to prepare the existing metal panel and to ensure a good bond between the spacers 30 and the existing metal panel 10 is to shot or grit blast the inner surface 18 of the metal panel 10. However, other methods to provide the required surface roughness and a paint and rust free surface suitable for bonding of the plastic materials can be used. Ideally the surface 18

should be free of dirt, dust, oil and water.

The intermediate layer core 40 should preferably have a modulus of elasticity,  $E$ , of at least 250MPa, more preferably 275MPa, at the maximum expected  
5 temperature in the environment in which the reinforcing is to be used. In ship building applications this may be 100 °C.

The tear, compression and tensile strengths as well as the elongation should be maximised to enable the reinforced panel to absorb energy in unusual load events,  
10 such as impacts. In particular, the compressive and tensile strengths of the plastics material should be optimally at least 2MPa, and preferably 20MPa. The compressive and tensile strengths can, of course, be considerably greater than these minima.

The ductility of the plastics material at the lowest operating temperature  
15 should be greater than that of the metal panel or metal layers. A preferred value for the ductility of the plastics material at lowest operating temperature is 50%. The thermal coefficient of expansion or contraction of the plastics material must also be sufficiently close to that of the metal panel 10 and metal layer 20 so that temperature variation across the expected operating range, and during welding, does not cause  
20 delamination. The extent by which the thermal coefficients of expansion or contraction of the two materials can differ will depend in part on the elasticity of the plastic but it is believed that the thermal expansion coefficient of expansion or contraction of the plastics material may be about ten times that of the metal layers. The coefficient of thermal expansion may be controlled by the addition of fillers to  
25 the plastics material.

The bond strength between the plastics material and inner surfaces 18, 22 of the metal panel and layer should be at least 0.5MPa, preferably 6MPa, over the entire operating range. This is preferably achieved by the inherent adhesiveness of the  
30 plastics material to the metal but additional bond agents may be provided.

Additional requirements if the metal panel 10 is part of a ship hull, (as shown schematically in Figure 3), include that the tensile bond strength across the interface must be sufficient to withstand expected negative hydrostatic pressure and delaminating forces from metal connections. The plastics material must be hydrolytically stable to both sea and fresh water and if the member is to be used in an oil tanker must have chemical resistance to oils.

Conveniently the plastics material may be an elastomer and the reinforcing metal layer 20 may be a steel, stainless steel, an aluminium alloy or any other typical metal associated with standard construction practice. The elastomer may therefore essentially comprise a polyol (e.g. polyester or polyether) together with an isocyanate or a di-isocyanate, a chain extender and a filler. The filler is provided, as necessary, to reduce the thermal coefficient of the intermediate layer, reduce its cost and otherwise control the physical properties of the elastomer. Further additives, e.g. to alter mechanical properties or other characteristics (e.g. adhesion, water and oil resistance), and fire retardants may also be included.

The size of the injection ports required and their positions will depend on the available equipment for injecting the components of the plastics material and the orientation of the cavity. Generally there is one injection port per cavity. The ports may be located in either the reinforcing layer 20 or the metal panel 10 and should be located to minimize or eliminate splash. The injection ports are ideally quick disconnect ports, possibly with one-way valves, that can be ground off after casting. They may also be sealed with plugs which are ground smooth after casting.

Air vents are placed in each of the plurality of cavities to allow escape of all air in the cavity and to ensure no void space is left. The air vents may be threaded to allow insertion of plugs after filling or include valves or other mechanical devices which close after filling. The air vents and any plug or valve may be ground smooth after the plastics material has cured.

Plugs inserted in injection ports or air vents should be made of a material which has galvanic characteristics compatible with the metal layer 20. If the metal

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layer 20 is steel, the plugs may be of brass. Metal plugs for venting holes or injection ports may be detailed as temperature controlled pressure relief valves as required.

5       The injection process must be monitored to ensure even filling of the cavity without any back pressure which might cause swelling and uneven plate thickness, and to ensure that the dimensional accuracy (core thickness) is maintained within the specified limits.

10       After manufacture and during the life of the reinforcement, it may be necessary to verify that the elastomer has correctly adhered to the metal layers. This can be done using sonic, ultrasound or x-ray techniques or by any other suitable calibrated technique.

15       In this way the metal panel 10 of the existing structure may be reinforced without removal and without detaching the components such as supporting beams 12, pipes or cables 14 and fire insulation material from the underside 18.

20       Metal or elastomer support members 50 of any given shape with flat parallel end surfaces, may also be placed on or attached to the inner surface 18 of the metal panel 10 between the spacers 30 before the reinforcing metal layer 20 is attached to the spacers 30. These supporting elements 50 support the reinforcing metal layer 20 and ensure dimensional accuracy (elastomer thickness and reinforcing metal layer flatness).

25       Figure 2 shows in plan typical spacers 30 and support elements 50 which can be used in the present invention. Most conveniently the spacers 30 are rectangular in cross-section such that they can easily be joined together to form cavities of a suitable size for injecting elastomer. The flat surface 32 of the spacer 30 provides an  
30       ideal landing surface for the reinforcing metal layer 20 and for making butt welds or plate seams 36.

The thickness B of the reinforcing metal layer 20 is preferably more than 1mm but may be of any thickness that provides the required structural characteristics and facilitates fabrication, handling and welding, such as 6mm. A thickness of 3mm provides an additional ten years of use maintaining the deck plate structurally equivalent or better than the existing metal panel 10 by itself. A thickness C of plastics material is optimally between 10mm and 25mm but may be thicker depending on the application and structural requirements. For example, for tank tops of bulk carriers, the average core thickness may be 100mm thick.

- 10 A complete deck overlay with dimension B being equal to 3mm and dimension C being equal to 15mm with a plan dimension of 140 metres by 19 metres (a typical deck of a Ro-Ro ferry) is equivalent in weight to about one lorry. Such a deck would provide a minimum additional ten years of use for the ferry. Such a reinforced deck has a dead load of approximately  $2.5\text{kN/m}^2$  compared to a dead load
- 15 of the original decking which is 12.5mm thick of  $2.2\text{kN/m}^2$ .

Figure 4 illustrates how the method could be applied to a deck surrounding lashing pot. In such a case (and in any circumstance where the existing panel 10 does not abut a metal member at or close to right angles e.g. at hatch covers) a spacer 30 may be utilised to form the side wall between the cavity 40 and the outside of the reinforced structure. Fillet welds 35 can then be used to attach the spacers 30 to the existing panel 10 as well as the lashing pot and to attach the reinforcing layer 20 to the spacer 30.

- 25 Figure 5 shows alternative positioning of the reinforcing layer 20 relative to the existing panel. In the illustrated method, the reinforcing layer is attached, in spaced apart relationship, to the existing stiffened plate panel on the same side as the existing supporting members 12 (for example longitudinal girders and transverse beams) and stiffening members 17. This embodiment allows stiffened hulls and side
- 30 structures in which the outer plate surface is adjacent to a fluid (sea water, oil etc.) to be reinforced. This same method of reinforcement may be applied to other internally

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stiffened plates, where applicable, to lengthen the service life or to increase load carrying capacity and impact resistance.

In the example shown in Figure 6 the reinforcing panel is welded directly  
5 onto an adjacent bottom end 19 of the existing stiffening members 17 using butt  
welds 36. In such an arrangement, because of the large depth of the cavity, it may be  
advantageous to place foam forms 60 in the cavities to reduce the overall weight of  
the reinforcement. Although not explicitly illustrated in Figure 6, the space or cavity  
between 10 and 20 may also include services (piping, cables) as disclosed in British  
10 Patent Application No. 9926333.7.

Figure 7a shows alternative positioning of the reinforcing metal layer 20  
relative to the existing structure. In the illustrated embodiment, the reinforcing metal  
layer 20 is attached, in spaced apart relationship, to the existing stiffened plate panel  
15 on the same side as the existing supporting structures 17. The reinforcing layer 20 is  
bent around the bulb flats such that the bulb flats are positioned between the existing  
metal panel 10 and the reinforcing metal layer 20. In the embodiment illustrated in  
Figure 7a the reinforcing metal layer 20 is welded to spacers 31 which are also  
welded to a surface of the bulb flats 17 opposite the surface of the bulb flat on which  
20 the bulb flat is attached to the metal panel 10. The spacers may be continuous or  
intermittent to allow uncured plastics material to flow freely around bulb flats 17 or  
to define cavities of limited volume which include one or more bulb flats. Figure 7b  
illustrates an embodiment in which the spacers 31 are not utilised for the attachment  
of the reinforcing metal panel 20 to the bulb flats 17. The embodiment illustrated in  
25 Figure 7b also shows that plate seams joining reinforcing metal layers 20 are made at  
each bulb flat along the length of the flange of that bulb flat 17. The embodiment  
illustrated in Figure 7c shows the metal layer 20 attached to angle stiffeners or in the  
limiting case transverse beams or longitudinal girders 12 in a similar way to the  
attachment of the reinforcing metal layer 20 to the bulb flat 17 illustrated in Figures  
30 7a and 7b. In all of the embodiments illustrated in Figures 7 the reinforcing metal  
layer 20 is bent such that the metal layer 20 is further from the metal panel 10 in the

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proximity of the beams 12 or bulb flats 17 than in other positions. The metal layer 20 may be bent in any shape (e.g. curved, flat, etc.) and may be a plurality of panels, for example, one between each bulb flat 17 or may be a continuous sheet. The advantage of the embodiments as illustrated in Figures 7 is that the reinforcing metal layer 20 simplifies the inner surface making it simpler to apply quality coatings, reduces localised plate bending at the stiffener-plate welded connection, diminishing the probability of fatigue cracking of joining welds and provides additional reinforcement to stabilise or strengthen existing stiffeners which may be damaged or otherwise.

In all embodiments the intermediate layer 40 may be injected through either the metal panel 10 or the reinforcing metal layer 20 at as many locations as required to ensure that the cavities are completely filled.

The embodiments illustrated in Figure 7 are ideally suited for structures where there are significant numbers of obstacles, like deck fittings, piping, hatches, etc. on the outer surface of the metal panel 10 that would interfere with the application of a metal layer as illustrated in Figure 1. Furthermore this embodiment can be applied to structures that have suffered stiffener damage (buckling or yielding) from localised overloading.

In yet a further embodiment, existing stiffeners are cut to shorten their length and leave stubs, and the reinforcing layer is attached to the existing panel in spaced apart relationship to the stiffener stubs. In such an arrangement the intermediate layer needs to be thicker to give the required stiffness. This embodiment is useful if the stiffeners have been deformed or damaged or existing welds between the stiffeners and plating have fractured.

In all embodiments, prior to attaching the reinforcing layer, weld cracks in the stiffeners may be repaired and other maintenance work carried out.

The present invention has been described above in relation to a deck of a Ro-Ro ferry. However the invention is also useful in other applications, especially those where high in-plane and transverse loads are expected, for example slamming loads, or where high rupture strength, high fatigue strength or high resistance to crack  
5 propagation is desirable. Examples of such structures are tunnel linings, orthotropic bridge decks, cargo holds, tank tops of bulk carriers, hulls, external ship structures, off-shore structures, especially helicopters, stadium roofs, and containment vessels.

An example of a further application of the present invention is illustrated  
10 schematically in Figure 8 which is of a cross-section through an existing main pipeline 210 which has been reinforced or reinstated or rehabilitated using the method of the present invention. In this specific embodiment, circumferential end or intermediate ring spacers 230 are provided in sealed contact against the outer surface of the main pipeline 210 and a reinforcing layer (pipe casing) 220 is attached in  
15 spaced apart relationship from the pipe 210 to the rings 230. In this way a cavity which can be filled with an intermediate layer 240 is formed between the reinforcing layer 220 and the existing pipe 210. The reinforcing layer 220 can be made up of a plurality of sections, for example two sections with a semicircular cross-section which are welded to an outer surface of the ring 230 (opposite the inner surface  
20 which is in contact with the pipe 210) and to each other using longitudinal welds 221 as illustrated in Figure 10. Of course any number of sections may be used to make up the reinforcing layer 220.

To avoid direct welding to the existing main pipeline 210, which could lead  
25 to burning through or rupture of the existing pipe wall, full penetration groove welds 236 are only made between the reinforcing layer sections 220 and the rings 230 or between reinforcing layer sections 220.

The circumferential end or intermediate ring spacers 230 are generally of the  
30 same material as the reinforcing layer sections 220 or of a weld compatible material. In one embodiment of the invention, two semi-circular reinforcing layer sections 220



with semi-circular end ring spacers 230 already attached on their mating surfaces, are brought together around the existing pipeline 210 (for example clamped in place) and two longitudinal weld seams 221 are made. In this way a complete reinforcing layer 220 is formed around the existing pipeline 210 with spacers between the reinforcing layer 220 and the existing pipeline 210. Circumferential weld shrinkage along the weld seams 221 draws the reinforcing layer tighter around the existing pipeline providing a tighter connection (seal) between the spacers 230 and the existing pipeline 210 to form an airtight annular cavity.

Two or more reinforcing layer sections 220 with quarter circle cross-sections or with cross-sections of other fractions of a circle may be used to form a complete reinforcing layer 220. The reinforcing layer 200 need not exactly match the shape of the existing pipeline.

In Figure 9a an O-ring gasket 235 is illustrated on the inner surface of the ring 230. In Figure 9b a flat gasket 237 is illustrated on the inner surface of the ring 235. The o-ring 235 or flat gasket 237 provided on the inner surface of the spacer ring 230 provide a contact seal with the outside of the existing pipe when in place. Alternatively the gaskets 235, 237 may be replaced by adhesive which seals around the existing pipeline.

In this method, the reinforcing metal layer 220 provides the necessary hoop strength for internal pressure of fluid in the pipe and the intermediate layer 240 a corrosion protection layer to the existing pipeline that also acts an effective seal.

Figure 10 illustrates an existing main pipeline 210 with a spur pipeline 215 that was reinforced using the method of the present invention. A first reinforcing metal layer 220 is provided around the outside of the existing pipe 210 and a second reinforcing metal layer 225 is provided around the spur pipeline 215. In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 10 both the first reinforcing metal layer 220 and the second reinforcing metal layer 225 are provided by two sections of semicircular

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cross-section joined along welding line 221 with a full penetration groove weld. The ends of the reinforced section on both the main 210 and spur 215 pipelines are fitted with end ring spacers 230 which provide air tight cavities between the reinforcement and the existing pipelines 220 and 210, and 225 and 215 respectively. Sealing details are similar to those described in Figures 9a and 9b. Plastics material (elastomer) is injected into the cavities to provide a composite pipeline connection.

Two embodiments of a method of adding a spur pipeline 215 to an existing main pipeline 210 are illustrated in Figures 11 and 12. In Figure 11 the first reinforcing metal layer 220, which is comprised of two sections of semi-circular cross-section, with semi-circular end ring spacers 230 attached, is positioned around the existing main pipeline 210 and welded along longitudinal seams 221, as is shown in Figure 10. A circular ring spacer 250 is positioned around a through hole (for the spur pipeline) in the first reinforcing layer wall and between the existing pipeline 210 and the first reinforcing layer 220. The circular ring spacer has curved upper and lower surfaces for good contact with the first reinforcing layer 220 and the existing main pipeline 210. Weld shrinkage in the circumferential direction draws the reinforcement tight enhancing the seal along all spacers.

The spur pipeline 215 is welded to the first reinforcing metal layer 220 such that its bore aligns with the through-hole and is substantially perpendicular to the axis of the existing or main pipeline 210. The second reinforcing metal layer 225, which is comprised of two sections of semi-circular cross-section with one end ring spacer 230, are placed around the spur pipeline 215 and welded along the seams and to the first reinforcing layer 220 with a full penetration groove weld. Airtight cavities between the first reinforcing layer 220 and the existing main pipeline 210 and between the second reinforcing layer 225 and the spur pipeline 215 are injected with plastics material 240 which is allowed to cure to form a composite pipeline connection. Next, valves, joins and boring equipment are attached to the free end of the spur pipeline. The original main pipeline wall is then bored using existing technology, allowing the contents of the main pipeline to pass freely into the spur

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pipeline, i.e. the bores of the spur and main pipelines come into contact.

The second embodiment of the method of adding a spur pipeline according to the present invention is illustrated in Figure 12. In this embodiment the spur pipeline 5 215 is welded (simple fillet welds of sufficient capacity and size to provide a seal for the purpose of injecting plastics material) directly to the existing pipeline 210 before the first reinforcing metal layer 220 and then the second reinforcing metal layer 225 are attached as described in the previous embodiment. This method has the advantage that the seal 250 is not required. Welding directly to the existing pipeline 10 is not considered to be a disadvantage as the welds are small and not structurally critical. The remaining steps for completing the composite pipeline connection are as previously described.

The first and second reinforcing metal layers 220, 225 and the intermediate 15 layer 240 provide the T-joints with excellent strength and stiffness. The thickness of the reinforcing layers and intermediate layers are chosen to give the required structural characteristics. The intermediate layer 240 effectively protects the existing pipeline against corrosion and provides a seal against leaks. The composite pipeline connection is robust and ductile. It is capable of sustaining substantial impact loads 20 and relative displacements due to ground subsidence.

CLAIMS

1. A method of reinforcing an existing metal structure comprising the steps of :  
providing a reinforcing metal layer on said metal structure in spaced apart  
5 relation to thereby form at least one cavity between inner surfaces of said metal  
structure and said reinforcing metal layer;  
injecting an intermediate layer comprised of an uncured plastics material into  
said at least one cavity; and  
curing said plastics material so that it adheres to said inner surfaces of said  
10 metal structure and said reinforcing metal layer.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said step of providing a reinforcing  
metal layer comprises the steps of:  
adhering spacers at one end to said inner surface of said metal structure; and  
15 adhering said inner surface of said reinforcing metal layer to said spacers at  
the other end.
3. A method according to claim 2, wherein said spacers are metallic and said  
steps of adhering comprise welding.  
20
4. A method according to claim 2 or 3, wherein said spacers are plate spacers,  
spacers made of plastic, lashing pot collars or backing bars.
5. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein supporting  
25 members are arranged in said at least one cavity in contact with said inner surface of  
said metal structure and said inner surface of said reinforcing metal layer.
6. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein before said  
providing step said inner surface of said metal structure is shot- or grit-blasted and  
30 cleaned.

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7. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said reinforcing metal layer is less than 20mm thick.
8. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said  
5 intermediate layer is at least 10mm thick.
9. A method according to any one of the previous claims, wherein said plastics material is an elastomer.
- 10 10. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said existing metal structure is a tunnel lining, a bridge deck, a cargo hold, a ship hull, a ship deck, bulkhead, an external ship structure, a containment vessel, a building structure, an off-shore structure or a pipeline or a smaller metal part of such an existing structure.
- 15 11. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein said existing metal structure is a metal panel of larger existing structure.
12. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein said existing metal structure is an existing metal part of a larger existing structure.
- 20 13. A method according to claim 11, wherein said metal panel is supported by beams, girders or bulb flats and said reinforcing metal layer is arranged such that said beams, girders or bulb flats are positioned between said metal panel and said reinforcing metal layer.
- 25 14. A method according to claim 13, wherein said reinforcing metal layer is bent such that said reinforcing metal layer is further from said metal panel in the proximity of said beams or bulb flats than in other positions.
- 30 15. A method according to claim 13 or 14, wherein said reinforcing metal layer is attached to said beams or bulb flats on a surface opposite a surface on which

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said beams or bulb flats are attached to said metal panel.

16. A method according to claim 15 wherein said reinforcing metal layer is attached to said beams or bulb flats via a spacer.

5

17. A vessel with an existing panel reinforced using the method of any one of the preceding claims.

18. A method according to claim 1, wherein said existing metal structure is a  
10 pipe.

19. A method according to claim 18, wherein said step of providing a reinforcing layer comprises the steps of:

15 providing at least two spacer rings around and sealed against an outer surface of said pipe; and

attaching said reinforcing metal layer between said at least two spacer rings thereby to form said cavity between said outer surface of said pipe and said reinforcing layer.

20 20. A method according to claim 19, wherein said reinforcing layer is comprised of at least two sections with circular arc cross-sections and welded together in the longitudinal direction of said pipe.

21. A method according to claim 19 or 20, wherein said at least two spacer  
25 rings comprise an O-ring gasket on an inner surface to form said seal against said outer surface of said pipe.

22. A method according to claim 19 or 20, wherein said at least two rings  
comprise a flat gasket on said inner surface to form said seal against said outer  
30 surface of said pipe.

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23. A method of adding a spur pipeline to an existing main pipeline comprising the steps of:

providing a first metal layer around said main pipeline in spaced apart relation thereby to form a sealed cavity between an inner surface of said metal layer and an outer surface of said main pipeline;

providing a spur pipeline such that the bore of said spur pipeline is substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of said main pipeline and in communication with said outer surface of said main pipeline and sealed from said first cavity;

providing a second metal layer around said spur pipeline in spaced apart relation thereby to form a second cavity between an inner surface of said second metal layer and an outer surface of said spur pipeline;

injecting an intermediate layer comprised of an uncured plastics material into said cavities;

curing said plastics material so that it adheres to said surfaces of said metal layer, main pipeline and spur pipeline; and

removing that part of said existing main pipeline which is in communication with said bore of said spur pipeline thereby to connect said bore of said spur pipeline with the bore of said main pipeline.

24. A method according to claim 23, wherein said step of providing a spur pipeline occurs before said step of providing a first metal layer and comprises: welding said spur pipeline at an end to said main pipeline.

25. A method according to claim 24, wherein said step of providing a first metal layer comprises attaching said first metal layer between at least two spacer rings around said main pipeline and around the circumference of said spur pipeline.

26. A method according to claim 23, wherein said spur pipeline is welded to said first metal layer in spaced apart relation to said main pipeline.

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27. A method according to claim 26, further comprising the step of providing a seal between said outer surface of said main pipeline and said inner surface of said first metal layer around the bore of said spur pipeline.

5 28. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 27, wherein said step of providing a second metal layer includes welding an end of said second layer to an outer surface of said first metal layer.

29. A method of adding a spur pipeline to an existing main pipeline substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

10

30. A method of reinforcing an existing metal structure substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

15

31. A reinforced metal structure manufactured by a method of reinforcing according to any one of claims 1 to 22 and 30.

32. A main pipeline with a spur pipeline added by a method of adding a spur pipeline according to any one of claims 23 to 29.

20



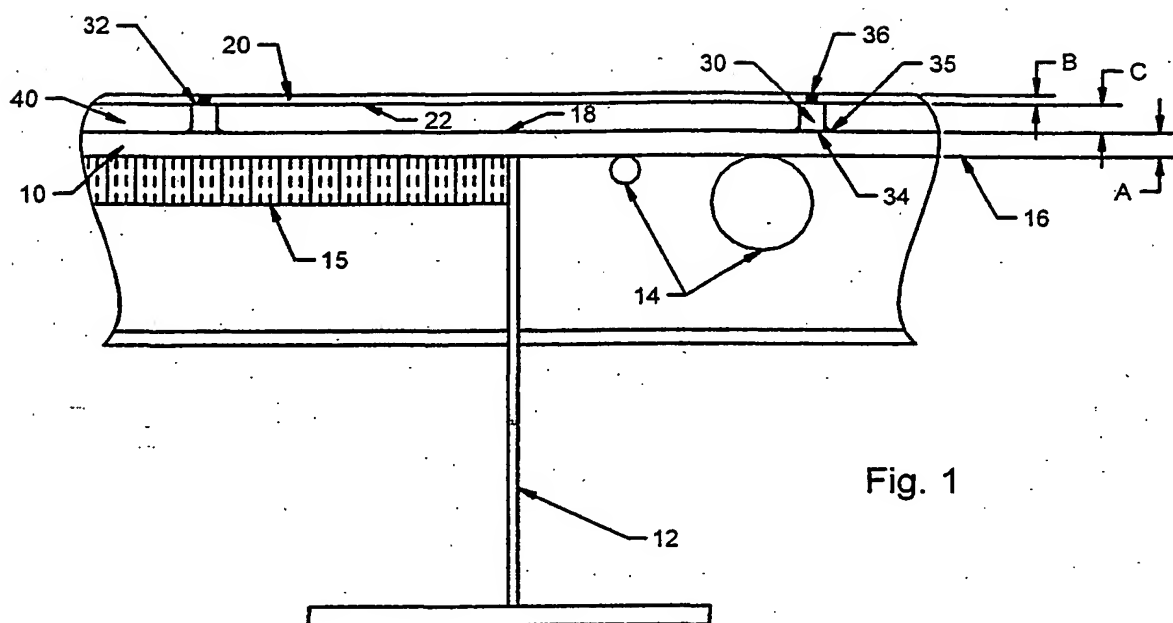


Fig. 1

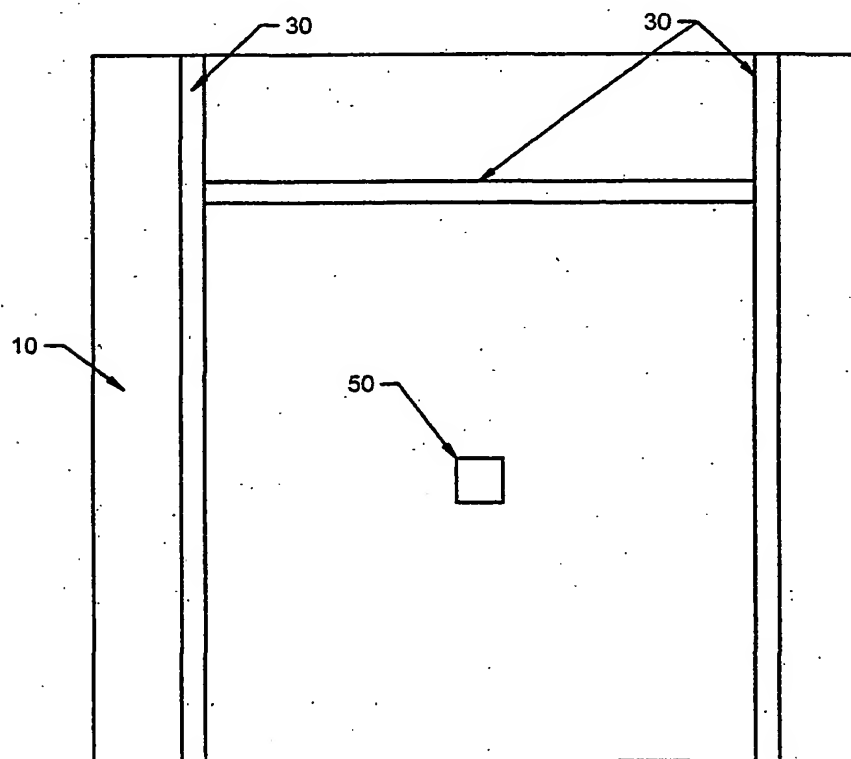


Fig. 2

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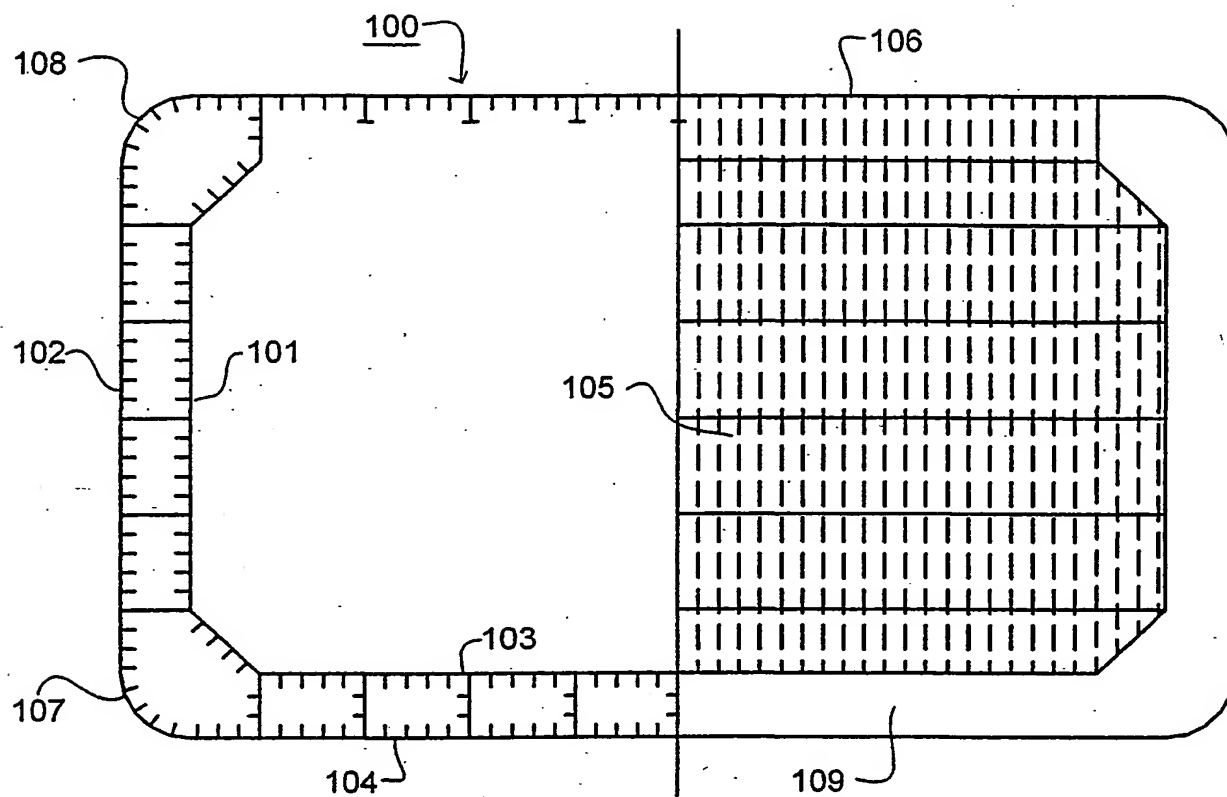


Fig. 3

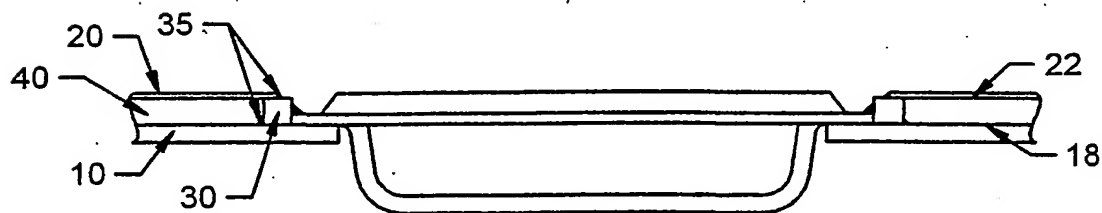


Fig. 4

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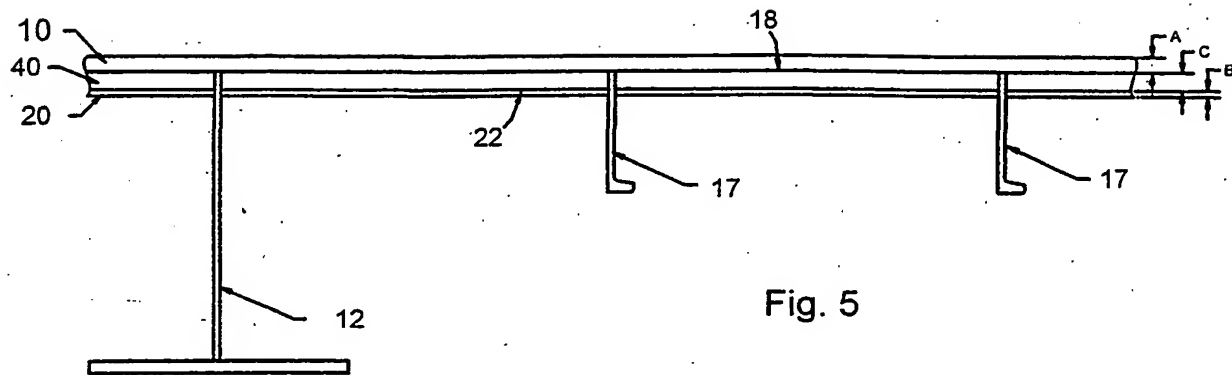


Fig. 5

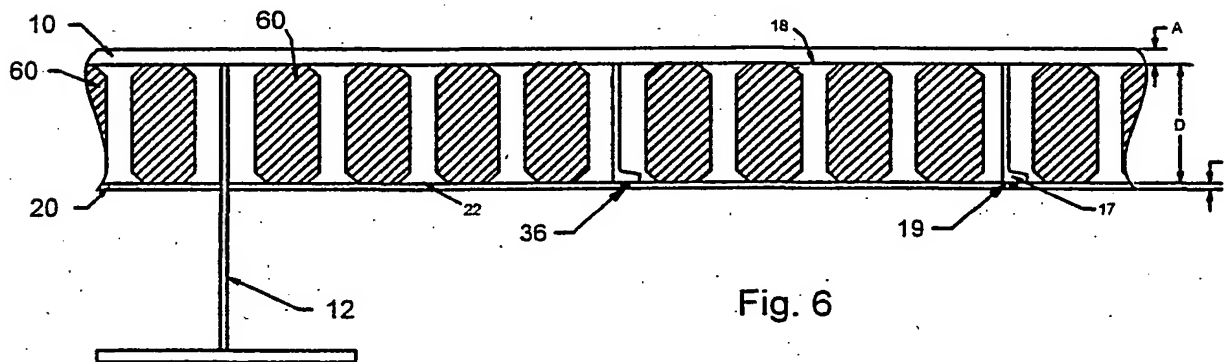
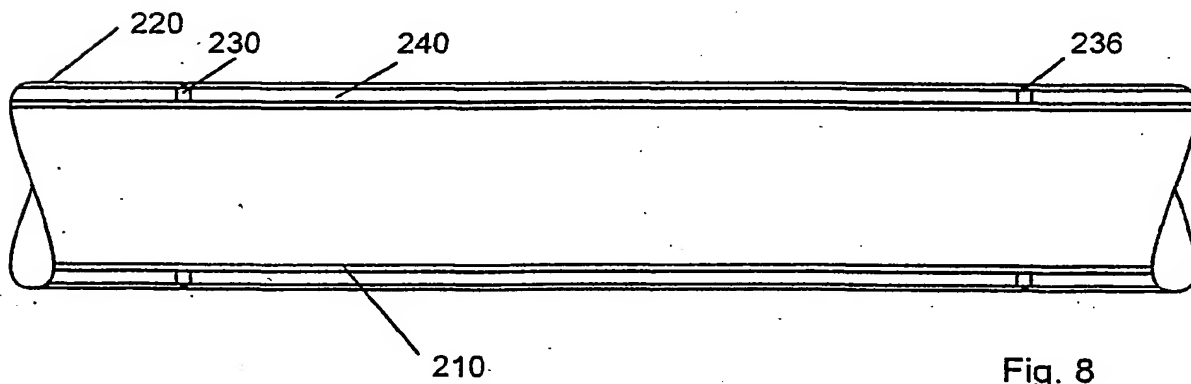
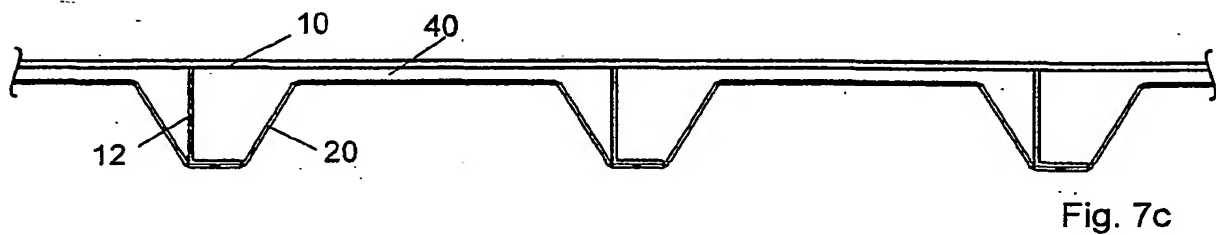
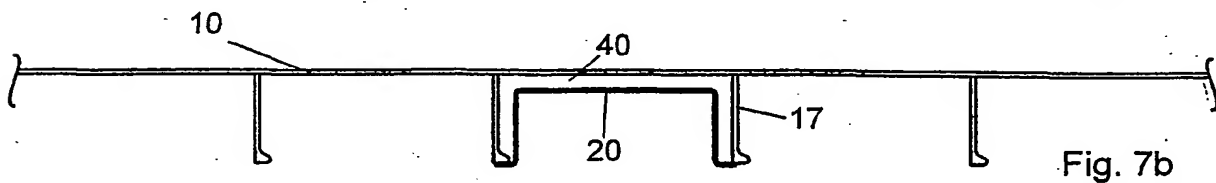
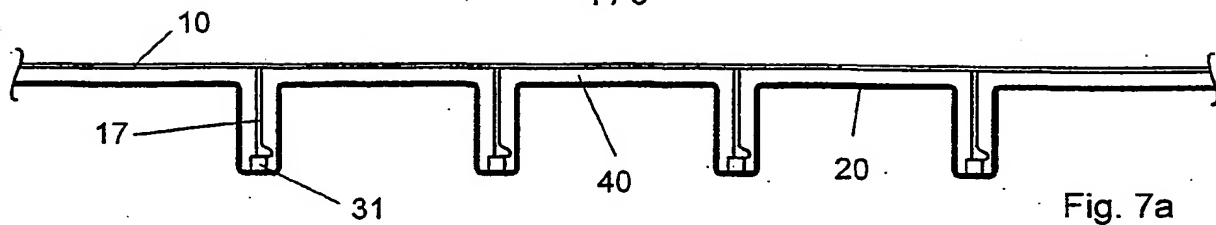
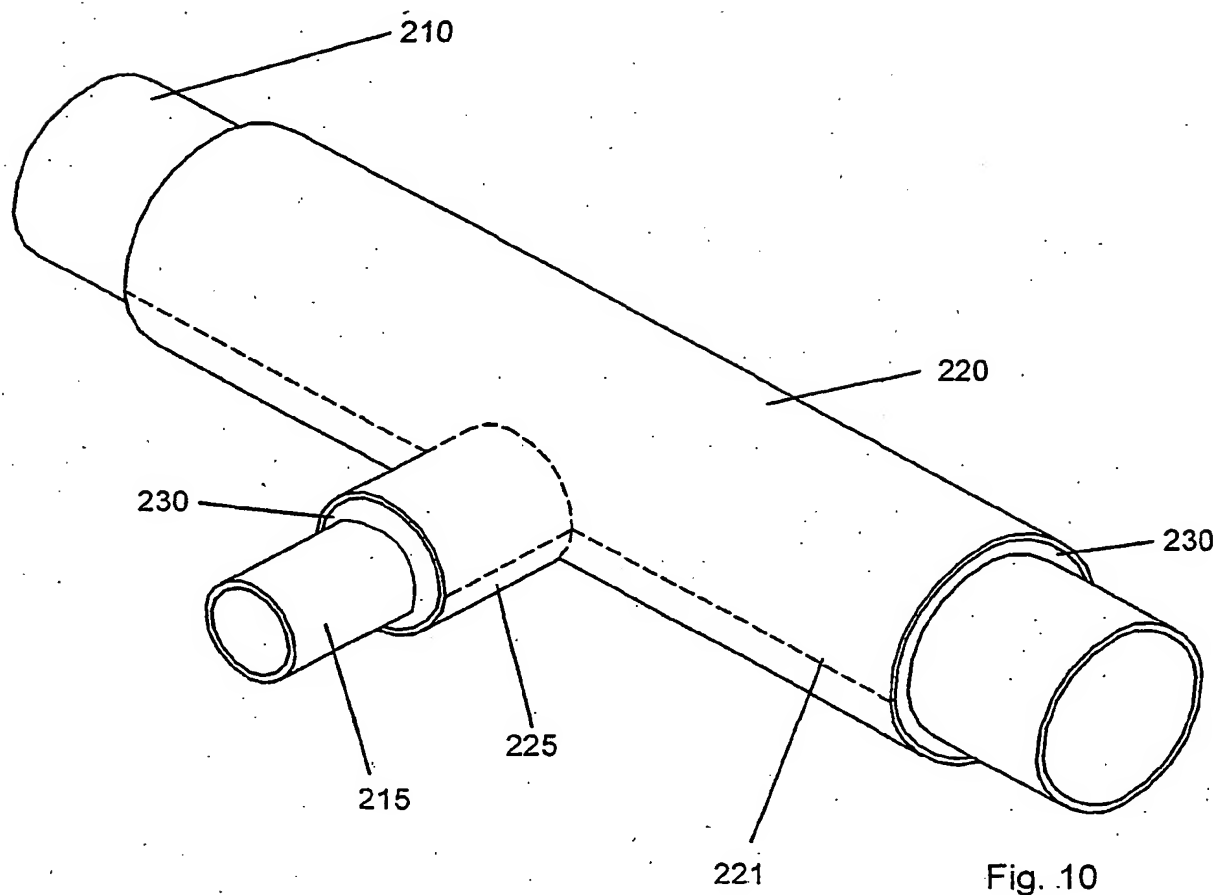
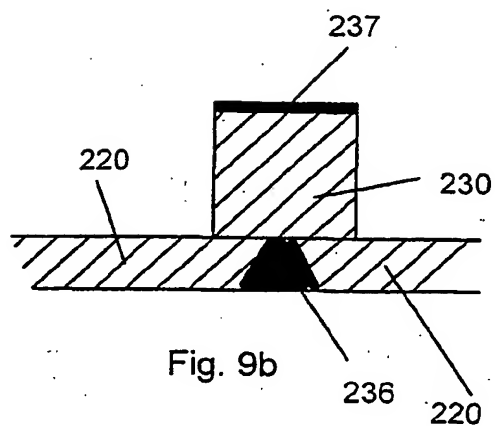
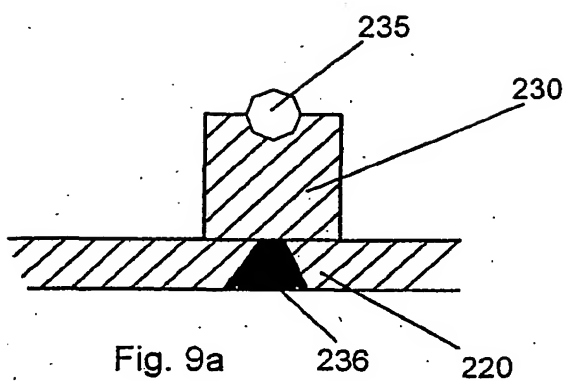


Fig. 6

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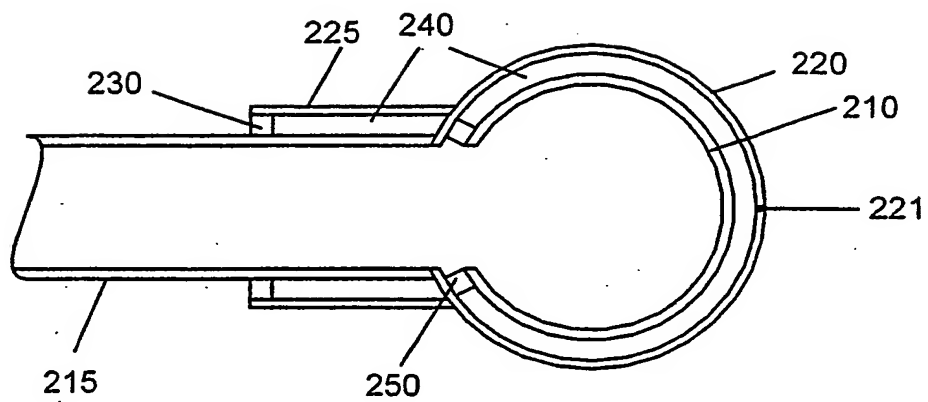


Fig. 11

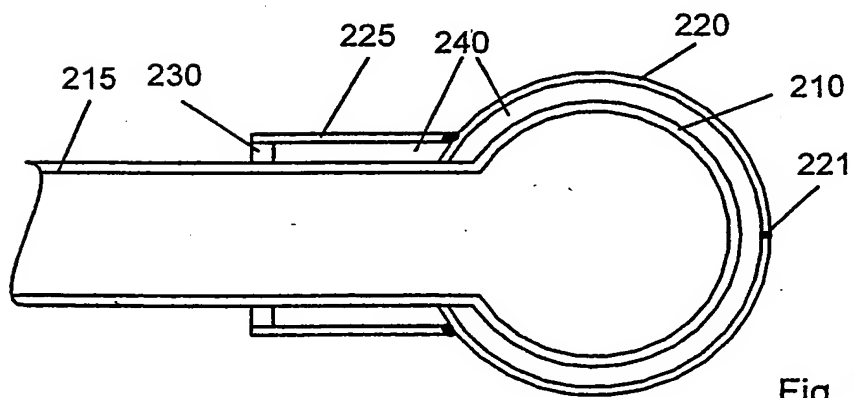


Fig. 12

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
14 March 2002 (14.03.2002)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 02/020341 A3**

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: **F16L 41/08**

(21) International Application Number: **PCT/GB01/03754**

(22) International Filing Date: **21 August 2001 (21.08.2001)**

(25) Filing Language: **English**

(26) Publication Language: **English**

(30) Priority Data:  
0022072.3 8 September 2000 (08.09.2000) GB  
0107803.9 28 March 2001 (28.03.2001) GB

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(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.

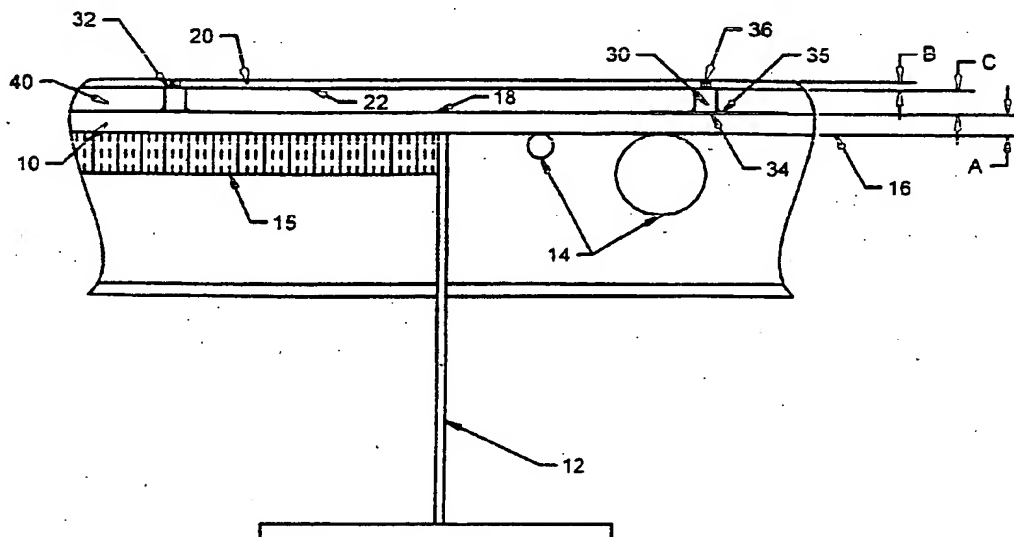
(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— with international search report

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: **METHOD OF REINFORCING AN EXISTING METAL STRUCTURE, METHOD OF REINFORCING PIPES AND METHOD OF ADDITION OF SPUR LINES TO PIPELINES**



(57) Abstract: A method of reinforcing a metal panel or pipe of an existing structure comprising the steps of attaching a reinforcing metal layer to said metal panel or pipe in spaced apart relation to thereby form at least one cavity between inner surfaces of said metal panel and said reinforcing metal layer, injecting an intermediate layer comprised of an uncured plastics material into said at least one cavity, and curing said plastics material so that it adheres to said inner surfaces of said metal panel or pipe and said reinforcing metal layer.

WO 02/020341 A3



(88) Date of publication of the international search report:  
11 December 2003

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## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

 International Application No.  
 PCT/01/03754

 A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER  
 IPC 7 F16L41/08

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 F16L

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EP0-Internal

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 842 496 A (MACFARLANE TREVOR ET AL) 1 December 1998 (1998-12-01)	23,24, 26,29,32
Y	the whole document	25,27,28
Y	US 5 125 691 A (BOGDAN LAZAREVIC) 30 June 1992 (1992-06-30) abstract; figures	25
Y	FR 2 329 925 A (BBC BROWN BOVERI & CIE) 27 May 1977 (1977-05-27) page 3, line 2 -page 4, line 28; figures	28
Y	US 3 907 049 A (BAFFAS GEORGE J) 23 September 1975 (1975-09-23) column 3, line 29 - line 52; figures	27
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Date of the actual completion of the international search

18 April 2002

Date of mailing of the international search report

18 APR 2002

Name and mailing address of the ISA

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International Application No  
PCT/GB 01/03754

## C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	<p>US 6 036 235 A (ANDERSON DON ET AL) 14 March 2000 (2000-03-14) abstract; figures -----</p>	23-29, 32